

PRIMITIVE MAN

CONTENTS

The Mohave Neonate and its Cradle.....	1
GEORGE DEVEREUX	
Infancy and Childhood among the Mohave Indians.....	19
WILLIAM J. WALLACE	

PUBLISHED BY THE
CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, 17, D. C.



PRIMITIVE MAN

Quarterly Bulletin
of the
Catholic Anthropological Conference

Vol. 21 Washington, D. C., January and April, 1948 Nos. 1 and 2

THE MOHAVE NEONATE AND ITS CRADLE ¹

GEORGE DEVEREUX

Topeka, Kansas

I PROPOSE to describe the first days of the Mohave infant's life and to discuss Mohave cradles and cradling practices. Mohave nursing customs have been described elsewhere (4), and need not be considered in this study.

Appearance of the child. According to Dr. Nettle (17), "The newborn child is of a light color and always marked with the Mongolic spot. Very few infants have teeth at birth, and only about one child in ten is born with hair, which is usually about two inches long." The Mohave assert, however, that all children are born with hair. This statement, as well as a certain observance, seems to indicate that they confuse the fuzzy hair of the newborn child with genuine hair. The Mohave clip the fuzz of the newborn, but do not throw the clippings away, lest the hair should fail to grow again. Instead, by intertwining the clippings with some bark-string, they fashion a necklace for the infant, which "prevents slobbering" and also "makes the hair grow nicely." Obviously, if the hair were not mere fuzz, no bark-string would be needed to braid it into a necklace.

¹ From the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

It is permissible to comment upon a baby's good looks or good health.

Family Resemblance is valued and is freely pointed out. As stated elsewhere (7) repeated intercourse during pregnancy increases the similarity between the child and its father. If the father feels that the infant does not resemble him sufficiently, he might repudiate its paternity (5). It is probable that denials of family resemblance are often little more than an expression of suspicions of infidelity, or else a means of punishing an erring wife. Such at least is the opinion of the Mohave, who feel so strongly that it is "a mean thing not to recognize a child as one's own" that some of them lay claim to a paternity which neither the woman, nor the child, on reaching maturity, is willing to recognize. An argument between two men, both of whom claimed the paternity of a child, even led to murder. Nonetheless some Mohave men repudiate the paternity of a child whom public opinion has, rightly or wrongly, attributed to them. The repudiation of paternity always produces a great deal of resentment, and sometimes causes the mother, or her kin, to kill the infant at birth (5). The problem of unrecognized children will be discussed elsewhere.

The Maternal Kin of the child usually plays a prominent role during the early days of its life. Despite the fact that the Mohave reckon descent in the paternal line, there is an informal feeling that "somehow the baby belongs more or less to the mother's family." This opinion may be due partly to the instability of marriages, and partly to the fact that the parturating woman is cared for by her own kin, who, therefore, are the first to come in contact with the child.

Postnatal Care is both practical and prophylactic. Practical measures pertain to the routine of taking care of the child, both under normal conditions and in emergencies. Prophylaxis, on the other hand, consists primarily in various taboos, most of which are imposed upon the parents, and involve the child only in relatively minor ways.

Dr. Nettle (17) described postnatal care, as it existed in 1910, roughly as follows: "The old woman then takes the baby, gives

it a lick and a promise with a little cold water, wraps it in a dirty rag or two, and ties it to a board, while some other members of the family prepare the cradle. This takes several days." (The reference to cold water is probably an error.)

The following account, which supplements that of Dr. Nettle, was pieced together from data provided by several informants of both sexes, all of whose accounts agreed to a remarkable extent.

Shortly after its birth the child was bathed by a relative. The infant was washed either by hand, or else with a soft "sponge" of shredded bark called *hanavsu:t*. The mother herself was not permitted to touch the newborn child, lest it should have too dark a complexion. The "whitish substance" which covers the body of the neonate was "cut" with, and removed by means of, some red paint. The Mohave, who like the odor of this paint, protected the child's skin against "cracking and scaliness" by liberally anointing it with red paint throughout its babyhood, "the way White people cover their babies with vaseline." Teate asserted, however, that children were never painted before they were one month of age.

"Whenever the infant was born in the winter-house"—a specification which suggests the possibility that this custom applied only to children born during the cold season—the Mohave dug a pit under a recently extinguished fire located near the mother's couch, and lined the pit with a mixture of warm ashes and a little cool dirt. Another informant claimed that the dirt was not mixed with, but merely covered, the ashes. The pit was then properly moulded, to fit the shape of the infant's body. The infant spent the first four days of its life in this pit, its body covered with finely shredded bark—or, according to another informant, with shredded bark covered with ashes. "This kept the infant's body at an even temperature." The child was removed from the pit only when it was absolutely necessary to do so, i. e., for the purpose of re-heating the pit, or of washing the infant. "The child remained in the pit from morning until evening, covered with ashes up to its chin." The minor divergences in these accounts probably reflect individual variations in the technique of baby-care.

The above account tallies closely with the creation myth, and

lends support to the native allegation that, in aboriginal times, newborn children were put through a ceremony closely resembling menstrual observances. This need not surprise us, since the body of the child was originally "made of clotted menstrual blood" (7).

The child was bathed every day in warm water. It is said that the Mohave were careful not to moisten either the umbilical cord or the dressing applied to it (9). After the bath the child was wrapped into loose layers of shredded willow bark, which were neither woven nor tied around the infant, but were merely spread loosely over it. In other words, the child was simply embedded into a large tuft of shredded bark. Thus the infant did not have to lie directly on the ashes, and, if the child was really buried in ashes up to its chin, the ashes were probably put on top of the layer of shredded bark. It is quite probable that the same is also true of the ash-covering of menstruating girls.

It has been stated that the child was left in the pit for four days. This is perhaps merely a stereotyped way of expressing what another informant stated in a more descriptive form when he asserted that the child was left in the pit only "until a relative of the father or of the mother had time to make a cradle, and to present it to the mother. The making of a cradle took several days."

Deformations. As soon as possible, and, at any rate, "soon enough so that the child would feel no pain," i. e., in general within four days after birth (10), the child's ears were pierced. The ears of boys were pierced both through the lobe and at the top of the ear. The girls' ears were pierced in the same places, with a third perforation through the rim of the ear. (For a slightly different version of this practice see (11). The avowed purpose of this operation was to "tame the children. It teaches them not to be wild, and gives them common sense." Ear piercing had no esoteric significance, and was not a prerequisite either for attaining a full human status during lifetime, or for entering the land of the dead. The ear was pierced by a person who was merely technically proficient, and who needed no supernatural sanction for the practice of this form of minor surgery. The na-

ture of the instrument used was not recorded, but one may presume that a simple sharpened stick, similar to the one used in piercing the nasal septum, was used. During the healing process, the closing of the perforations was prevented by means of a thin cord of shredded bark, which was inserted into the holes. These cords were removed only when the child reached the walking age, and were then replaced by various kinds of ornaments.

The Cradle of the Mohave Indians is of the Colorado-River board-type, whose affinities and distribution were studied by Spier (18), Kroeber (15), and others.

According to Dr. Nettle (who collected a few cradles now in the possession of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles), the child was tied with rags to a board until its cradle was ready. While this may have been the practice around 1910, it was not the aboriginal custom in pre-reservation times.

Hrdlička (12) described the Mohave(?) cradle as follows: "Among the . . . Mohave . . . the cradle board consists of a reed frame, to which are fastened numerous flat crosspieces of light wood and a hood. The base is covered with a specially made mat of soft cedar bark, overlaid with cloth, or with several layers of old calico, some cotton wadding, or only a layer of excelsior. Under the head is placed an additional fold of calico or a special pad, and a similar pad may be used under the shoulders to keep the child's body straight. The infant is covered with two or three layers of calico or cotton cloth, and over these are folded the cradle flaps, laced or bound together. The bow is covered on the back with a larger piece of cotton cloth to protect the head of the child from wind and dust; from the fore part of it are suspended rattles or other playthings to amuse the infant, and perhaps an amulet to protect it."

Since the manufacture of cradles was a tedious, rather than a difficult process, they were generally made only when the Mohave felt reasonably certain that the child would live.

Wet mesquite roots were heated over a fire and then bent into a U-shape over a man's knee, "because a man's knee is about the size of a child's head." If the cradle was intended for a boy, the two branches of the U-shaped frame were made to converge



Fig. 1. Mohave Cradles

(1, left) Cradle with typical girl's awning and modified female (?) cradle-strap. Length: 33"; width of awning: 12"; width at base: 12". (2, right) Doll's cradle with typical boy's cradle-strap. Length: 20½"; width at base: 8½"; length of doll: 11½". Collected by M. A. I. Nettle, M. D., and donated to Southwest Museum. Photograph courtesy of Southwest Museum, Los Angeles.

a little, because a boy's hips were supposed to be narrower than his shoulders. If, on the other hand, the cradle was intended for a girl-child, the two branches ran parallel, because a girl's hips were supposed to be as wide as her shoulders.

In other words the shape of the cradles apparently reflects the Mohave aesthetic standards for adults.

The tying and cushioning of the cradle required large amounts of shredded bark which, however, was always available in a Mohave household.²

A string of bark, tied across the open end of the cradle-frame, held it bent into the shape of a U. The frame was then permitted to dry. When the cradle-frame was completely dry, twelve to fourteen arrow-weed twigs (depending on the size of the child) were tied between the two branches of the U-shaped frame. The top "rung" of this "ladder" was placed so as to support the child's shoulder, while the lowest one bore the weight of its feet. This work required some skill, since the "rungs" of this "ladder" were tied with tough strips of mesquite bark exactly between the branches of the frame. The strips of bark were wrapped first around the "rungs," and then around the branches of the frame. (At present the Mohave use nails and wire instead of strips of bark. The shape of the cradle itself has remained unchanged, however.) At this stage the "rungs" sufficed to keep the frame bent in the shape of a U. Hence the rope, which had previously held the ends of the branches together, could now be removed. The open forked end of the frame enabled the woman to carry the cradle propped up on her projecting hip.

The cradle-maker next provided support for the neck and head of the child. A web of willow-bark, one and a half inches in thickness, was woven between the curved top of the frame, and the uppermost, or second from the top, "rung." Long streamers of bark, which dangled from this webbing, covered the rest of the "ladder," and formed a soft mattress of loose fibers, about two

² The bark was stripped from a willow tree, and was made to rot for a month in water. The outer bark was then stripped and discarded and the inner bark, which was used for many purposes, was shredded, and prepared for further use.

inches in thickness, on which the body of the child came to rest. According to Dr. Nettle (17), these streamers are at present replaced by "little mattresses of cotton and soft rags."

A strong ring, made of the twisted inner bark of the willow, was then deformed and the narrow "bridge" of the compressed ring was tied together with some willow-bark. This rigid "pillow" was then inserted under the head of the infant, and served to prop up its head when the cradle was laid down. The entire cradle was then covered with extremely finely shredded bark. A loose, flat pad, six to eight inches in diameter, made of very soft shredded bark, was placed under the child's buttocks, and served to absorb its urine and faeces.

The last stage was the manufacture of the decorated awning, called *supúr*. The cradle-maker bit into the thick end of willow-twigs, and split them lengthwise. Next the twigs, with the flat, split surface on top, were laid out in such a manner that twigs, whose thick end pointed in one direction, alternated with twigs whose thick end pointed in the opposite direction. These parallel twigs formed a warp, roughly eight inches in width. These rods were then woven together by means of a series of strands of willow-bark. In ancient times these strands formed a set of crude, parallel zigzags, two to four inches apart, running across the warp. This crude wicker-work technique was recently replaced by a somewhat more elaborate warp-technique. Instead of letting the strands of the woof run in oblique zigzags, they now run perpendicularly to the twigs. When the last twig is reached, the strand is wrapped around it several times, and is then made to run again through the warp, in the opposite direction, etc. The distance between these strands is from two to three inches. When this part of the work was completed, the awning was bent into the shape of a ring, whose overlapping ends were then inserted under the "pillow," between the frame and the mattress, and were held in place by the weight of the child's head. In some cradles, however, the hood was securely tied to the frame.

Small lumps of red paint and a few beads were tied to the awning of a girl's cradle. Some people covered the entire hood with red calico, and further decorated it by means of a double

string of beads, which was tied on the outer surface of the awning "in a zigzag pattern." Some persons further enhanced the cradles of both sexes by letting a few sea-shells, obtained from the Yuma, dangle from the awning thereof.

Downy hawk feathers were hung from the top edge of the hood, in the summer, in order to provide some shade for the child. (The use of the dreaded hawk feathers as cradle ornaments is rather interesting to note.) In the winter the entire cradle was wrapped in a blanket, which the hood kept off the child's face.

The cradle awnings of boys were decorated with feathers, which emphasized their future manhood. According to interpreter, some cradles were also adorned with white "pelican" feathers, "in imitation of the war-bonnet."

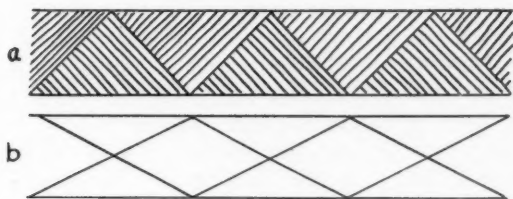


Fig. 2. (a) Boy's cradle strap. (b) Girl's cradle strap.

The child was tied to the cradle by means of woven willow-bark cradle-straps. The cradle-straps of boys were adorned with triangles filled in with hachures (fig. 2, a), whereas the cradle-straps of girls were decorated with lozenges (fig. 2, b). Dr. Nettle's (17) description of cradle-straps is somewhat similar: "The boys' binding straps are woven in straight lines (hachures?) and the girls' in squares (lozenges?). The Indians tell me that the straight lines represent the arrows of the hunter, while the square represents the corners of the house where the woman reigns supreme. The boys' sun-screen (i. e. awning) is ornamented with feathers, or woven in the same design as the binding-strap. The girls' is decorated with beads." If Dr. Nettle's information is correct, one might infer that the ancient zigzag pattern of the

awning corresponds to the cradle-strap design of boys, and that the recent wicker-coil technique of the awnings is a clumsy replica of the elegant series of lozenges on the girls' cradle-strap. As regards the symbolism referred to by Dr. Nettle, if correct, it is one of the rare instances of specific symbolization in Mohave culture.

Dolls' cradles closely resembled children's cradles.

The cradle is usually made by a man, though the mattress may be the gift of an old female relative. However the complete cradle is always offered to the mother by one man only.

If we bear in mind that the shape of the boy's cradle differs from that of the girl's cradle, and that the Mohave do not believe dreams (7) predicting the sex of unborn infants to be absolutely conclusive, it is easy to understand why the cradle is usually prepared only after the child is actually born. One minor informant stated, however, that some people may start working on the cradle even before the child is born. Another informant stated, on the contrary, that work on the cradle was not begun until the parents felt reasonably certain that the child would live. Still another belief is reported by Dr. Nettle: "A native woman never prepared any clothes or other supplies for her coming infant, owing to the peculiar superstition that if she did, the child would die. Even today we have to contend with much of this old superstition, even among the better educated school girls" (17). It is suggested that Dr. Nettle's information is somewhat incompatible with the general trend of Mohave taboos, and may rest upon a misunderstanding of the Mohave opinion that it is inexpedient to prepare a cradle until one is certain that the child will live. On the other hand certain data pertaining to twins make the existence of any rigid rule regarding the manufacture of cradles somewhat doubtful. One of the principal informants made the following statement: "If only one cradle was made before the twins were born, another cradle would be quickly prepared, and, though the second cradle may be the work of another man, both cradles would be presented to the mother by the same person." (3) However, the cradle just mentioned may very well have been a used one, since the Mohave sometimes gave, or lent, used cradles

to women who had just borne a child. Like many other Mohave customs, the rules pertaining to the exact moment of the making of the cradle appear to be rather indefinite ones.

Cradling Practices. The Mohave infant was not put into the cradle until the fourth day of its life, because until that time "its little body is just like a piece of newly moulded clay. That is why they are handled with so much care." Even after being put in the cradle, they are not allowed to lie motionless in the cradle for too long a period, because it might flatten the back of their heads (i. e. the occiput). This precaution is a significant one, since some Mohave are known to have accidentally flattened skulls (10).

Tufts of soft bark are placed between the infant's legs, between its arms and torso, and between its arms and the cradle-strap, to prevent chafing. Thus, practically the entire body of the child, with the exception of its head and genitalia, was embedded in soft bark. The genitalia remained exposed, in order to avoid extensive soilure when the infant urinated and defecated. This practice enabled Dr. Nettle to observe the occurrence of erections in very young infants (6).

The child was tied to the cradle-board by means of cradle-straps which, in aboriginal times, were made of willow-bark, and are at present simply made of twine. The torso, as well as the arms and the legs, of the child were immobilized, in order to make it grow straight. The straps supporting the body were broader than those which held the legs in place. The strap was wrapped four times around the abdomen and the chest, once around the thighs and once around the calves. The last loop of the strap to be wrapped around the torso was pulled tight across the abdomen, and compressed the navel in order to prevent or to correct the protrusion of the navel. The duration of cradling is uncertain. According to Dr. Nettle (17), the infant is "constantly" in the cradle, "until it can run around, or until it is nine months old." Thereafter it will only sleep in the cradle.

According to my own informants, the child will be put in the cradle only if it has to be carried somewhere, or is expected to sleep. This does not tally entirely with the previous statement

that the child's head should not remain for too long in the same position, lest its occiput should be flattened. It is by no means certain, however, that the Mohave deliberately took the trouble to shift, now and then, the head of a sleeping infant. It is far more probable that we are once more dealing here with a formal and purely verbal custom, which has few or no practical applications.

The cradle may be carried on either hip. Since it is necessary to project the hip a little in order to carry the cradle, it is obvious that no woman can comfortably carry both twins at the same time. If the child is made to suckle while strapped to the cradle, its head will necessarily be above the woman's nipple. Hence the infant has to suck upward (4).

The cradle was carried almost exclusively by women. The mother took turns with her own, and with her husband's, female relatives, both young and old, in carrying the cradle around. Interpreter stated, "When I was a little girl, I too was burdened with a cradle, and was almost bent double under its weight."

Even uncradled children were carried around on the hip and, when nursing in this position, had to suck upward. The broad hips of the Mohave woman enabled her to carry the child in this position without undue discomfort. According to Drucker (10), the cradle is sometimes also carried crosswise on the head.

Seldom if ever do the Mohave make new cradles for a growing child which has outgrown its first cradle. It was felt that if a child outgrew its cradle, it could safely dispense with a cradle altogether. Whenever bigger cradles were made, they were prepared in exactly the same manner as the smaller ones. Drucker (10) reports a maximum of two cradles per child. Old, damaged cradles, as well as those of dead cradling-age infants, were broken and then thrown into the Colorado River. The house in which a cradled child died was not burned down, since "an infant's house is the cradle." Cradles were never burned, since the burning of any object that had been in contact with menstrual blood, or with a menstrual blood surrogate such as a newborn child, caused the mother to become barren. Now and then a woman all of whose children died at an early age became weary of child-

bearing, and attempted to make herself barren by burning the cradle. According to the shaman Hivsu: Tupo:ma, this technique of "contraception" was not always effective, however.

The tendency to use one and the same cradle for several children in succession, either within the same family, or by giving it away, appears to be on the increase, perhaps because modern cradles, made of board, wire and nails, are more durable than were the old bark-strip tied ones. The cradle of a child who died while still in the cradle is, however, never given away. Some informants even alleged that when an adult died his old cradle was also disposed of in the manner prescribed for the cradles of infants. This statement seems to be a meaningless one, since few cradles would last for several decades. It is furthermore not easy to see just how one could keep track of an adult's former cradle, if it still happened to exist. I never saw an adult who still had his old cradle in his possession, though Drucker (10) reports that old cradles are sometimes kept. Last of all, it is not quite easy to reconcile the burning of an adult's property with the custom of throwing his former cradle into the Colorado River.

In general, cradles were lent, rather than given away. No Mohave cradle was ever sold to another Mohave, though cradles have been sold to such collectors of ethnological specimens as Dr. Nettle. Even the cradles of twins could be lent, either to another pair of twins (which is an improbable contingency, since twin births were rare), or else to other infants. However, in view of the high mortality rate of twins, the cradles of twins were usually destroyed. In general, cradles were lent mostly to closely related families.

The death of the subsequent occupant of a cradle did not harm the initial or previous occupant thereof.

It should be noted that few or no ancient cradles can be found nowadays, partly because of child-mortality, partly because cradles were not durable, and partly because most older specimens are now in museums.

Sleep is intimately connected with cradling. When the adults wished to put a child to sleep, they immobilized it, by placing it in the cradle. As a rule, the Mohave did not rock the cradled

child, although now and then a woman did rock the child by swaying her body, while holding the cradle in her arms.

The Mohave had many lullabies wherewith to lull children to sleep. In theory each woman made up her own lullabies. In practice they usually lifted them bodily from various Hukthar (coyote) stories (8), or else from the Bird-cycle, if they happened to know it. The great mythological song cycles were not supposed to be used as lullabies, though now and then a woman presumed to sing a passage from either the long or the short (utau:t) version of the Tuma:np'a legend, instead of singing a standard lullaby. This, however, was quite an exceptional action, since the Mohave believe that only those who had received appropriate powers in dreams could and should sing the major song cycles (15). The Hukthar stories on the other hand, as well as ordinary lullabies, were public property, and any woman, if she was so inclined, felt free to improvise a song or to use a traditional one as a lullaby. The only esoteric significance of lullabies seems to be the fact that they appear to play a certain role in dreams forecasting death.

Lullabies, like other songs (1, 15) are characterized by a choppy "telegraphic" style, the elision of some phonemes, the arbitrary adding of syllables and the presence of numerous archaic words. The tunes of lullabies are usually somewhat monotonous, and do not represent the acme of Mohave musical achievement.

The following lullaby is said to be part of the tale of Patcekarawe:, though it was not sung to me when I recorded this tale (8). It was stated that this lullaby was sung to the infant hero Patcekarawe: by a cricket, who took care of him in the absence of his grandmother. It was obtained in three fragmentary versions and under great difficulties from Teatc, who could not be persuaded to sing slowly. The three fragmentary versions were then pieced together by Hivsu: Tupo:ma, who had heard this lullaby before. The allegedly meaningless word nyapáka-a: suggests the word napauk, or n-apau-k, meaning paternal grandfather (14). Since Patcekarawe: is both a "bird" and a Mohave, and since the cricket is an insect as well as a "person," the

cricket is free to refer to himself as the infant's paternal grandfather, since all of the hero's relatives, excepting his grandmother, are dead. (I failed to ascertain whether the surviving grandmother was the paternal or the maternal one. The root "tai" suggests the term for mother (14). This inference is indirectly supported by the symbolically incestuous character of this story.) At any rate, in view of the strict taboo on the names of the dead, the cricket would probably not refer to any relative of the infant hero, unless he himself were that relative.³

³ Italic *a* in native words as *u* in English "but"; *á*, accented syllable.

Kacmam, kacmam, / anya ta-oram / kimáuak kime:e-e / lyu vivak-aa: mintayinte / tea-e: nya-e: / inya-iny niyak / irao kuvama-te: / kwelelele:, kwelelele:, kwelelelehey.

Sleep, sleep, / sun noon / to-awaken cry / someone cares-for-you your-mother / (meaningless?) / a-seed to-get / soon will-not-return / (meaningless chorus).

This lullaby is sometimes sung in an expanded form.

Kacmam, kacmam, / anya ta-oram / kimáuak kime:e-e / lyu vivak-aa: mintayinte / tea-e: nya-e: / inya-iny niyak / irao kuvama-te: / [nyapa:ka-a: nyapa:ka-a: / cona:yo aa:ve: /] ⁴ kwelelele:, kwelelele:, kwelelelehey.

Sleep, sleep, / sun noon / to-awake cry / someone cares-for-you your-mother / (meaningless?) / a-seed to-get / soon will-not-return / (grandmother grandmother?) / to-pinch do-you-feel / (chorus).

The meaningless chorus, "kwelelele kwelelele kwelelelehey," is sometimes used as a lullaby, without the rest of the text. It is interesting to note that the chorus is similar to the surprised or angry exclamation of women, "peleley."

Some nursery rhymes, which often relate some small incident, may also be used as lullabies. Thus:

Silykatwen intc / akwák hakyam / hukthar apáye kanatcum / ilytea:vte ilytea:vte.

Little-worm thee / deer shot / coyote carry asked-him / ate-it-up ate-it-up.

⁴ The words in square brackets are sometimes omitted.

This song may be repeated indefinitely.

The following is a bathing-song. At the end of the song, the child is ducked. This ditty too may serve as a lullaby:

Avi muko:ra / teavi:k Matavi:iye (bis) / apeny ava: /
ekvis-nyava: / aha: tom-oram /uca-uc, uca-uc, uca-uc.

Stone from-mountain-top / thrown-by the-God-Matavilye
(bis) / beaver-house / muskrat-house / water full / (meaningless).

Insomnia. Although the Mohave allegedly had a drug (datura?) capable of inducing sleep, they never administered it to children. They did, however, resort to other means to induce the child to fall asleep. The small lumps of black paint dangling from a boy's awning, or of red paint which hung from a girl's awning, were said to lull the infant to sleep. Whether or not the sight of this paint, used by adults, was supposed to encourage the child to act like an adult and not be fretful, is open to speculation. Such an interpretation would be compatible with the Mohave emphasis on adult and responsible behavior. A more probable explanation would be that the child became sleepy while attempting to follow the pendulum motion of these dangling objects with its eyes.

Whenever the child "fussed too much," the parents resorted to another device to put it to sleep. All parents of small children kept in their houses a powder made of black paint, mixed with the charred and pulverized eyes of a little bird "that goes to sleep at sunset." A twig of arrow-weed was dipped into this paint, and was drawn along each eyelid, just above the eyelashes. This method of inducing sleep was believed to be an infallible one. A woman informant, N. C., made the following statement: "When my son was a baby, he used to sleep all day long and cry all night. At last, in order to get some peace, I used this method to make him sleep. This treatment had such a lasting effect that even though he is now twenty-seven years old, he still wants to sleep all the time, and is quite lazy."

The fact that the mother blamed herself for her son's shortcomings is quite characteristic of Mohave psychology, and of their conception of the function of prophylactic taboos.

Most children suffer from insomnia only when they are ill or upset.

Since Mohave cradling practices closely resemble those of the Navaho, it was deemed unnecessary to duplicate Kluckhohn and Leighton's (13, 16) very penetrating analysis of the probable social, psychological and medical implications of these practices. While only concrete psychoanalytic investigations could establish a definite genetic nexus between the wide field of vision afforded the infant immobilized in its propped-up cradle, and the Mohave Indian's conspicuous capacity for relaxed alertness, common sense suggests that the cradle provides a postural security which would tend to counteract the infant's basic fear of loss of support, and thus contribute to some extent to the psychological security of the personality-as-a-whole.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Densmore, F. Yuman and Yaqui Music. BAE-B 110, Wash., 1932.
2. Devereux, G. Der Begriff der Vaterschaft bei den Mohave Indianern. ZE, 69:72-78, 1937.
3. Devereux, G. Mohave Beliefs Concerning Twins. AA, n.s. 43:573-592, 1941.
4. Devereux, G. Mohave Orality. Psychoanalytic Qly, 16: 519-46, 1947.
5. Devereux, G. Mohave Indian Infanticide. Psychoanalytic Rev., 35:126-39, 1948.
6. Devereux, G. Heterosexual Behavior of the Mohave Indians. (In) Roheim, G. (ed.), Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences. Vol. 2. (In press.)
7. Devereux, G. Mohave Pregnancy. Acta Americana. (In press.)
8. Devereux, G. Mohave Coyote Tales. JAFL. (In press.)
9. Devereux, G. Mohave Indian Obstetrics. American Imago. (In press.)
10. Drucker, P. Culture Element Distributions. XVII: Yuman-

- Piman. Anthropological Records 6:vi+91-230, Berkeley, 1941.
11. Forde, C. D. Ethnography of the Yuma Indians. Univ. Calif. Publ. Amer. Arch. Ethnol., 28:83-278, 1931.
 12. Hrdlička, A. Physiological and Medical Observations Among the Indians of Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. BAE-B 34, Wash., 1908.
 13. Kluckhohn, C. Some Aspects of Navaho Infancy and Early Childhood. (In) Roheim, G. (ed.) Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences. Vol. 1. New York, 1947. (Pp. 37-86.)
 14. Kroeber, A. L. California Kinship Systems. Univ. Calif. Publ. Amer. Arch. Ethnol., 12:339-396, 1917.
 15. Kroeber, A. L. Handbook of the Indians of California. BAE-B 78, Wash, 1925.
 16. Leighton, D., and Kluckhohn, C. Children of the People. Cambridge, Mass., 1947.
 17. Nettle, M. A. I. Mohave Women. MS. of a Lecture. Parker, Arizona, n.d.
 18. Spier, L. Havasupai Ethnography. AMNH-AP, 29:81-392, 1928.

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD AMONG THE MOHAVE INDIANS

WILLIAM J. WALLACE

Indiana University

INTRODUCTION

THE Mohave are a Yuman-speaking tribe living along the Colorado River where it forms the boundary between California and Arizona. They share with other river Yuman peoples a distinctive and specialized culture based upon river valley agriculture and dominated by dream revelations and militarism.¹

¹ Mohave culture is described by Kroeber, 1925, and Curtis, 1908. Additional details are provided by Drucker, 1941.

The data on infancy and childhood presented here were obtained from Mohave living at Needles, California, and on the reservation at Parker, Arizona.²

I. INFANCY

Pregnancy is revealed to a Mohave woman only by the cessation of the menses, there being no other recognized signs. Immediately, she takes precautions for the benefit of the developing child. She must not look at a dead dog or her child will die or be born a cripple.³ Other people warn her if a dead dog is lying around so that she will not go near it. To see a snake, or a similar crawling creature, would cause her baby to be born with teeth; to paint her face during pregnancy would result in disfiguring marks upon the child's face. A pregnant woman should not look in a mirror or her offspring will be cross-eyed, nor should she cover her face while sleeping or her baby will be born

² The fieldwork was sponsored by a grant from the Department of Anthropology, University of California.

³ Even after the birth of her child, the mother must avoid looking at a dead dog or her offspring will become ill.

with a caul. Looking at an aged person, a cripple, or a corpse, however, does not affect the unborn child, nor does staring at a particular person cause the child to resemble him.

An expectant mother continues to eat regular meals, but she adds quantities of boiled corn to her diet "so that she will have plenty of milk."⁴ Salt is not forbidden. Her husband observes no food tabus. A husband and wife sleep together during the period of pregnancy but have no intercourse because "that would spoil the baby and be dirty for it." The wife must not lie flat on her back or "she will have a hard time of it." She can sleep on either side, but not on her stomach. The husband must lie in the same direction as his wife or the foetus will become crooked.

There is no method of predicting the sex of an unborn child by the condition or actions of the foetus, but the mother "can see what her baby will be three or four months ahead in a dream." If she dreams of feathers or a bow it will be a boy; if she sees a bead necklace, a skirt, or a doll in her dreams, it will be a girl. There is no attempt to influence the sex of the developing child, though the Mohave seem to prefer male children.

Activity is believed desirable for a prospective mother until the very time of labor, so she continues her regular tasks. As her period of pregnancy advances, however, she may be seized with spells of nausea and vomiting, and has short respites from work. She takes things easy for a time and avoids lifting heavy objects. Her female relatives assist her and prepare foods that are easily digested and "give her what she wants to eat." If the attacks of nausea are serious, it is thought that the baby does not want to come out and face the world and is trying to kill the mother. This rarely occurs, but when it does a shaman is called in to blow on the woman's body "to flatten down the child in there." A shaman may also be summoned, if the foetus is believed to be in the wrong direction. He "sits and feels the stomach of a woman and straightens it out." Miscarriage may be caused by a malevolent shaman.

The foetus is believed to have a conscious existence of its own

⁴ Drucker, 1941, states that a pregnant woman eats sparingly and the restrictions are extended to her husband.

and can experience things and express itself. If it becomes displeased or unhappy it may cause trouble for the mother. While still in its mother's womb a child can have a power-giving dream (sumach ahot). Later in life the same dream will be repeated to refresh the individual's memory.

Abortion is rare. An unmarried girl occasionally may induce miscarriage by carrying a heavy load on her back for a long distance or by having someone press her stomach or step on her back. The foetus is then buried immediately. There is no particular stigma attached to illegitimacy, so that a girl usually does not resort to abortion. The Mohave are fond of children and readily take in a bastard child and treat it the same as other children. There is a feeling that abortion is "not right" and a married woman never does it.

BIRTH

It is known that pregnancy has a duration of nine months. ("We count nine months from the time a woman has her last period.") The exact date on which the birth will occur is not calculated, but a woman knows when it is imminent "because the movements of the child tell her that it wants to come out." The expectant mother eats nothing for four or five hours before parturition, and she drinks no water "because it makes it hard for the child to force its way out of the water bag" if she does.

The woman remains in her own house as the time of childbirth approaches, and she is attended by close female relatives. There is no absolute ban on the presence of the husband, but he usually leaves. At the onset of labor the woman faces north "because the child would be ashamed to come out any other way and would move around inside if the mother faces any other direction." The woman gives birth seated on the ground. She leans back but holds neither rope nor stick. Two midwives assist: one in back "so that she will not fall over backwards"; the other in front who holds her around the abdomen and squeezes gently from time to time. The midwife in front opens the parturient's legs and takes the child with both palms open. She does it rapidly "so blood will not run in the baby's eyes and mouth." The

rear woman presses hard so as to force out the afterbirth which the other midwife receives.

Some women have a short labor of 20-30 minutes; others experience a difficulty and "want to stand up or walk around" and have to be restrained by the midwives. A woman tries not to cry out because "the other women will make fun of her" later if she does. A mother-to-be is not given medicines to hasten delivery or to ease the labor pains. Prolonged and painful parturition is usually believed to be caused by sorcery or through the reluctance of the child to be born, and a shaman is summoned. A number of women die in childbirth.

The placenta is wrapped up in barkcloth by the midwife, and the husband takes it out to bury it.⁵ He places it in a deep hole and covers it up. No one should observe the burial.

One of the midwives cuts the umbilical cord with a sliver of stone. Usually a piece an inch or two long remains and this is folded over and tied about one-half inch from the navel with a piece of bark string. In a few days the stump dries up and falls off. The father then takes it out and buries it. If the remnant fails to drop off when it should, a "clay powder" obtained along the river bank is rubbed on to hasten the drying-up process.

The newborn baby is dipped in warm water and then dried with a piece of soft inner bark of the willow. A chalky powder is applied to its entire body. This is repeated for four days and "then a child gets its real skin." After the fourth day an infant's face may be painted with a mixture of red pigment and deer fat.

Stillbirths occasionally occur and are believed to result from such causes as an expectant mother seeing "snakes, lizards, or anything that crawls, or a dead dog." A stillbirth is immediately buried. An infant born with a caul is thought to have the power of seeing into the future, but is not considered unlucky. There is no explanation for birthmarks other than "the mother painted her face while she was carrying the child." No significance is attached to these blemishes.

⁵ Drucker, 1941, p. 139, indicates that the midwife disposes of the after-birth.

If a child is born crippled or deformed, it is left out on the desert to die because "there is no other way to heal it." After death it is immediately cremated.⁶ This is the only socially sanctioned form of infanticide.⁷ Twins are not destroyed, although they are regarded with awe because "they come from the sky" and are in this world merely as visitors.⁸ They are credited with a knowledge of supernatural things. Two male twins are preferred to any other combination. No physiological reason is given for the birth of twins. Triple births are unknown. The order of birth of children, either in twin or single births, is not considered significant. The first-born, for example, is not regarded as superior to subsequent children.

The new mother pays strict attention to her diet. She eats sparingly for "quite a while"⁹ and refrains from using salt for four days.¹⁰ Wheat mush and boiled corn are her principal foods. Fish and mushrooms are also eaten but not the flesh of wood rats because "her child will get a skin disease if she eats wood rats." Rabbit meat is avoided for two years lest her offspring develop an earache and a rash on its body. Cold water is also avoided. The father also abstains from rabbit flesh and does not use salt in his food for four days. He also refrains from smoking. The mother of a new born child must not touch her face or hair with her fingers, so a scratching stick of shredded arrowweed is provided.

INFANT CARE

A child is not put to the breast for the first four days. In the meantime "sweet stuff" (mesquite beans in warm water) is allowed to drip into the infant's mouth "so it will not starve."

⁶ Cremation is the usual method of disposal of the dead.

⁷ Devereux, 1939, p. 93, states that half-breeds, whose fathers belong to other races or tribes, are often buried alive at birth because it is felt that they do not belong to the tribe.

⁸ Devereux, 1941, describes Mohave beliefs concerning twins. He also seems to indicate an ambivalent attitude towards them.

⁹ Drucker, 1941, p. 140, indicates that the parturient ate sparingly for 20 days for the first child, 10 days for subsequent ones.

¹⁰ Kroeber, 1925, p. 747, states that the mother ate no flesh or salt for a month.

Sometimes little drops of wheat mush in warm water are substituted. The colostrum is considered to be harmful and care is taken to squeeze it all out. The mother cannot touch her own breast except with a cloth for one month ("or she will lose her milk"), so another woman presses out the fluid on to hot rocks each morning and evening for four days. This is also believed to increase lactation.

After the fourth day the child is fed whenever it cries or shows signs of hunger. Usually one breast serves for an entire meal, the other being saved for the next feeding. The mother holds her offspring, either in or out of its cradle, up to her breast, or lies down beside it. She also may nurse her baby as she walks along, holding the child on one side within reach of her breast. An infant is always permitted to eat as much as it desires. Usually a baby falls asleep after feeding and it is permitted to sleep as long as it wishes.

When a mother lacks milk or if the supply is scanty, a female relative kneads her breasts and steams them over hot rocks. This is done twice each day "until the milk flows easily." If this treatment fails to stimulate lactation, a relative who is nursing a child of her own acts as wet nurse.¹¹ A substitute is also employed to suckle a child if the mother dies in childbirth or soon after. If no nursing woman is available an attempt is made to keep the infant alive by feeding it a gruel of wheat or corn in warm water. When a mother is away during the day, an infant's grandmother offers it her breast or feeds it a little wheat mush in warm water.

A baby is not weaned until it is two years of age or older and "begins to stop of its own accord." Other foods are gradually introduced, however, and breast feeding is lessened as the child

¹¹ Devereux, 1939, p. 94, asserts that women suckling their own babies are unwilling to suckle another child, lest their own infants become jealous. No such feeling of reluctance was expressed by the informants interviewed. Rather, it seemed to be the regular and expected procedure. Devereux also states that if the mother dies in childbirth or shortly afterward the grandmother of the child submits to a galactopoeic treatment and suckles the child.

gets older. Wheat or corn mush is given to a three- or four-month-old child along with its mother's milk. Solid foods, such as meat, are not fed to a child "until it has teeth." A two- or three-year-old "is hard on its mother because it bites her breasts" and adults "start making fun of it so it will stop nursing."

Four days after birth an infant is placed on a cradle board. This is a narrow arch of willow or mesquite wood with long parallel sides to which transverse rods are lashed.¹² Materials for the cradle are prepared in advance but actual construction of it does not start until after the baby is born. The father makes the frame and his female relatives prepare the other parts. The shape of a cradle and its decoration denote the sex of the infant. A boy's cradle is not as broad as a girl's so the boy will have "narrow hips and nice straight legs." Feathers decorate a boy's cradle; blue and white beads a girl's. A mattress of shredded willow bark lines the cradle.

An infant, swathed in cloth, is tied into the cradle with two bands of woven bark. The bands for a boy are black and white, those for a girl "red or any other color." The infant's legs are tied down "so it will not get bow-legged," and the hands are also confined. The baby soon learns to lie quietly in the cradle and here it stays except when taken out for cleaning or to crawl about. Each time it is removed its arms and legs are rubbed up and down "to make them straight." When an infant wets or soils itself, it is taken out and wiped; and the mattress is removed and hung up to dry, or if soiled, soaked in water and then dried. Mattresses are used over and over again, and two or three are always kept on hand. A baby is confined to the cradle for most of the day until it is able to walk. If the first cradle is outgrown, a larger one is substituted.

At night the cradle board is placed beside the mother, either flat on the floor or slightly tilted, and the straps confining the infant's hands are loosened. Occasionally it is propped up so that the baby can look around. If the child is fretful the mother or

¹² Spier, 1933, pp. 314-319, gives a detailed description of Maricopa cradles and their manufacture. Mohave cradles and methods of construction are almost identical.

father hums a little tune and jiggles the cradle up and down by holding it on the lap and lifting the knees alternately. A baby is carried in its cradle, either balanced on the mother's head with a bark ring, or under one arm supported on the hip. It is never transported on the back.

An infant is bathed "when it is dirty—not very often." During the summer months a mother occasionally takes her offspring to a shallow lagoon to bathe, but usually she lays the child across her lap and rubs warm water over its body with the palm of her hand. Care is taken to keep the child free from skin irritations. If it develops a rash, a powder of white clay is sprinkled on the affected parts. A pot of this is always at hand and it is tasted before being applied "to make sure it is not salty." Each time the mother takes her child out of the cradle to bathe it, she pinches its nose "to make it long and narrow." When a baby is young its fingernails are peeled off so that it will not scratch itself. Later they are trimmed with a sliver of stone.

No clothing other than the swaddling cloth of the cradle is worn by a child. While crawling about it is completely naked. When an infant is four days old, its hair is singed with hot coals so that it "will have thick hair." Also on the fourth day the father or another male relative pierces its ear lobes. "Boys will be mean and rough unless their ears are pierced" but "girls' ears are pierced just so they can wear earrings." When a female child is able to sit up, beads or bangles are put in its ears.

Children seldom cry. When a baby cries, it is thought to be hungry and is suckled or the mother dips her finger in water and gives the child her finger to suck. If crying continues, the mother jiggles the cradle and hums a lullaby. Constant or continued squalling is construed as a sign of illness, and the child's head is felt to see if it is feverish. If it is, a doctor is called in to diagnose the cause of illness.

Amusements for an infant are few. No playthings are given to it while in its cradle and finger and hand sucking are impossible because its hands and arms are bound. The mother usually keeps her child nearby while she works so that it does not feel alone. Sometimes she improvises and sings little songs describing

the beauty and good behavior of her offspring. Adults are fond of children and often stop to tickle them saying, "kach a kach," or make grimaces or figures with the hands and fingers. A baby is occasionally taken out of its cradle and permitted to crawl around the house. Pebbles and other small objects are provided as playthings. If the infant shows a tendency toward left-handedness while playing, it is encouraged to use its right hand because "left-handed people are not liked" and "people make fun of them."¹³ A child seldom sucks on its hands or fingers while out of the cradle. Such actions are regarded as a sign of hunger and the child is offered food.

As a youngster gets older its periods of freedom from the cradle increase until it spends most of the day crawling about. Gradually it learns to stand "by pulling itself up against things." Adults encourage it to walk by holding out their hands. Usually "a child learns to walk when it is about a year old," but a sickly or weak child "takes much longer."

Toilet training begins when a youngster starts to walk about with some sureness. If the child urinates or defecates on the floor, the mother wipes it up and shows her displeasure by saying, "a:k." In this manner, the child gradually learns not to relieve itself in the house, but instead to go outside. A two-year-old is taken by its mother into the brush close by the house. Adults tease youngsters who are slow in learning bladder and bowel control.

When about six months old a child begins to call its mother "tata"; sometimes also the father. Parents encourage talking and "try to teach children words" and are "very proud" if their offspring learns to speak at an early age. As a youngster grows older instruction in correct speech is increased and "the mother or father keeps saying a word until the child catches it." Stuttering and lisping seem to be unknown.

The health of a youngster is carefully guarded. Its bowel movements are watched to see that it does not get constipated.

¹³ Actually the reason for discouraging left-handedness is that the left hand is used in wiping after defecation and should not be used for any other purpose.

Listlessness and a "hot head" are diagnostic of illness and a shaman who is a specialist on children's diseases is called in. No aids are given to an infant in teething, however, nor are there any first tooth observances. When a youngster loses his first deciduous tooth a male relative stands some distance away facing the child and flips the tooth toward it. This is done to insure good teeth. Baby teeth are allowed to fall out by themselves. There is no special attitude toward a child whose teeth erupt in an unusual manner or order.

A girl receives the family name of her father at birth¹⁴ and is also given an individual personal name by her grandmother or other kinswoman.¹⁵ A male child is called "humar" (child), or "humar ikinja" (child male), or by an affectionate term until he begins to walk. Then "any relation" gives him a name describing a physical or personality trait (e. g., "Mean Boy," "Tall and Light"). A boy may change his name a number of times, but a girl keeps the same one throughout life. Like a boy, she is often called simply "humar," or "humar hachinja" (child female). There is no naming ceremony for either sex.

Affection and regard mark the parent-child relationship. Parents fondle and sometimes kiss a child but never rub noses with it. The entire care of a baby devolves upon the mother, though a kinswoman now and then relieves her of some duties. The father takes an affectionate interest in his progeny, but has little to do with the actual upbringing beyond occasionally rocking the cradle or carrying his infant son or daughter on a long trip.

II. CHILDHOOD

DAILY LIFE

Both boys and girls go about naked during early childhood, but when they are about ten years old "they become ashamed

¹⁴ Kroeber, 1925, pp. 742-743, lists a series of family names. Curtis, 1908, also gives some.

¹⁵ A girl's individual name usually modifies or is related to her family name. For example, one woman named her two granddaughters who bore the family name Oeh, meaning "clouds or rain," alham ("move around"), and hachthai ("pouring down").

and want to wear clothes." A boy then begins to wear a breech-clout of shredded willow-bark, and a girl dons a two-pieced skirt of the same material. If it is cold, a rabbitskin blanket may be thrown about the shoulders. Barefootedness is habitual, even for adults. Young boys wear the hair straight and short, girls long and loose.

Mothers bathe their offspring either in the morning or evening in a warm shallow lagoon or lake created by the overflowing of the Colorado River. Some mothers bathe their children daily, whereas others bathe them infrequently. After a child is older, little attention is paid to its cleanliness and there are no regular baths. Youngsters, however, spend a great deal of time swimming, so that they are usually clean.

Children eat with their parents; often they are served first. Meals are prepared either once or twice a day, but a pot of food is continuously kept simmering on the fire so that a hungry youngster can help itself to food any time during the day. A young child is fed by its mother or father, but a youngster soon learns to feed itself and is provided with a separate pottery bowl. Dried foods are scooped up with two fingers, stews and mushes with three. The right hand is always used in eating because "it is bad to be left-handed" and because "the left hand is used in going to the toilet." Parents discourage a child from using its left hand by slapping the fingers. Children are permitted to eat as much as they wish if there is sufficient food, but are cautioned "not to eat too much or they might get sick" and not to waste food. Left-overs are poured back into the cooking pot. Adults advise youngsters not to eat too much fish because "it is too fattening and they will have big bellies when they grow up." A child is usually not persuaded or coerced to eat. Lack of appetite is usually construed as symptomatic of illness.

A young child sleeps between its parents "where it is warm" until it is seven or eight years old. Then it begins to sleep alone. Usually the soft, sandy floor of the house serves as a bed with the fire for warmth. Sometimes straw or shredded bark or, if it is cold, an old rabbitskin blanket is used for a mattress. In summer children and adults sleep out under the flat-topped sun-

shade or ramada. Youngsters are allowed to stay up as late as they desire, but after a hard day's play they are ready for bed soon after dusk. An old man tells tales until all the children are asleep. Stories about Coyote (Hukthare), the sly Trickster, and a man-eating giant (Fiu—"Big Man Pack") are favored. Children are usually up with the first morning sun, although if a child wishes to stay in bed late it is permitted to do so.

Toilet training, already begun in infancy, is continued, though it is not unduly stressed. A mother continues to take her offspring out into the brush with her until the child is old enough to go alone. A youngster is instructed to "go behind a bush," "out of sight," and "to wipe with leaves or grass, using only the left hand."¹⁶ Boys are less modest than girls in their excretory

¹⁶ Children are told to cover their feces "so rabbits will not get into it and give us sickness, because people eat rabbits."

habits, and often urinate near the houses. If a little girl should do this, she is told "to go away" because "it does not look nice for girls to do that."

Concern for a child's health does not diminish as it becomes older. The physical condition of a youngster is carefully watched and if signs of illness are observed, treatment is given immediately. A number of medicines and home cures, most of which are standard remedies for adults as well, are administered. Greasewood boiled in water is gargled to relieve a toothache. Burns are treated with a salve made from a ground-up vine ("like a cantaloupe"). A warmed hand is placed on an aching head and slight cuts are swabbed with "an oil made of roots." A shaman is called in to treat serious illnesses and severe wounds.

RECREATION

Children find ample time for play and their pastimes are numerous and varied. Many amusements are in imitation of the life of adults and thus serve an educative as well as a recreative function. Little girls play with dolls made by themselves or by their mothers from arrowweed, unbaked clay, or, occasionally, rags. Miniature shelters are constructed for the dolls and imaginary conversations are carried on between them. "Cooking"

with grasses and mud in little, crudely-formed clay pots is a game enjoyed by most girls. Girls also play tag, run races, and climb trees. Both girls and boys play cat's cradle and ring-and-pin.

The pastimes of boys are more active. They soon learn all the games played by the men, and teams of boys compete in shinny, kickball, and in hoop and pole games. Shooting with bows and arrows at bundles of grass or arrowweed tossed into the air leads to proficiency in the use of the bow. Running after a wind-blown hoop of willow is a favorite sport which develops physical endurance. Many of the diversions for boys are in reality mock battles or individual contests and are a definite part of the training process for the life of a warrior. Opposing lines of boys put small clay balls on the end of sticks and sling them at one another. Wrestling matches, which often result in rough and tumble free-for-alls, also harden boys for military service. Normally, the boys themselves arrange these games, but sometimes adults encourage them to engage in rough sports. The older people get boys up early in the morning and "the boys all run together and try to see who runs the fastest and farthest." Boys who cannot run long distances are "joked about by the other boys and the women." Those who excel are "all praised when they get back."

Swimming and playing in the water are the favorite sports of both boys and girls, and during the hot summer months, youngsters spend most of their time in the water. Both sexes learn to swim while still quite young, first in a shallow lagoon, later in the river itself. Older children instruct the younger ones. Children and adults normally swim with an overhand stroke, with the hands open and the feet going alternately up and down. They also swim on their backs with a back arm stroke and tread water. Before entering the water, an individual wets his hair with a handful of water "to avoid the shock." Usually youngsters dive in head first or feet first, but the more timid immerse themselves gradually by wading into the water. Floating logs serve as boats, and games of water tag are played. Boys and girls play together in the water when they are young, but as they grow older, separate play groups are formed. Both sexes cover the genitals with

mud while drying or sunning themselves on the river bank. If the sun is hot, mud is also plastered on the hair.

Boys and girls do not play together regularly after they are six or seven years old. Girls tend to play more sedentary games in small groups of three or four individuals, whereas boys are more active and rove about in gangs. Playmates are usually relatives or children from neighboring houses. If a boy plays with dolls or seems to prefer the company and pastimes of girls "his parents dress him in a little girl's skirt and tease him." "When a child is a boy, his parents want him to be like a boy and act like other boys."

Disputes often arise during play and children fight hard and savagely. Sometimes adults have to come out and "tell them that it is just a game and they should have a good time and not fight over it." Beyond settling serious quarrels, adults seldom interfere in the games of children, though if youngsters are noisy in their play, a crotchety old man may tell them to be quieter or to go some place else to play. If they pay no heed, he may scold them and chase them with a stick.

Children like pets and often have puppies of their own to care for. These are given descriptive names (e. g., "Spotted," "Little One"). Fledglings of doves, quail, and other birds are also kept as pets. Cages of willow sticks are made for them and grass seeds are gathered for their food. The young of small mammals are captured and raised. When a boy sees a ground squirrel with young he pours water down the hole until the young squirrels come out. The pets belong solely to the youngsters and are not disposed of or disturbed by adults. The property rights of children are respected.

Youngsters enjoy chewing milkweed gum. Boys gather the plants in the summer and drain the milk into a hollow pumpkin stem. This is then placed in hot sand until the liquid congeals into a rubbery mass. Arrowweed root gum is also chewed. The "red stuff from the roots is melted out in a pot and then dropped in water": a kind of "black stuff" results which is used as chewing gum. Children are also fond of "sugar" (honey dew) from aphid secretions on willow leaves. The leaves are sucked

or the excrescences are picked or washed off the leaves and then boiled in water. The resulting liquid is sipped or it is allowed to evaporate until bits of solid sugar remain.

EDUCATION AND DISCIPLINE

As soon as instruction and advice are likely to be effective, parents and other relatives initiate a process of training and correction. A boy is given a small bow by his father and is instructed in its use. When he is old enough to be useful, he accompanies the men on hunting trips and fishing expeditions, staying close by them and observing their actions. Gentle chidings await the boy who fails to come home with game or fish. Gradually a boy learns to use the weapons and equipment of men, and later he is instructed in their manufacture by his father and grandfather. All of this training is casual and sporadic and no effort is made to compel a boy to learn.

Every effort is made by a mother to interest her little daughter in the domestic duties she will be called upon to perform as an adult. A young girl first plays at cooking; later she receives instruction, and finally is allowed to prepare the family meal. Other skills, such as pottery making, and the weaving of rabbit-skin blankets are all taught to her by her mother, or other kinswoman. A girl accompanies the women when they set out to collect wild vegetable foods, and she is told where to look for the best mesquite or screw beans and how to gather them. When the women return the little girl carries home some of the gathered foods in a small carrying cloth. The gathering of firewood and fetching of water are also tasks in which a young girl assists her mother.

Older boys and girls occasionally aid in the planting and harvesting of crops, thus learning the techniques necessary for successful farming. There is no compulsion to make them work in the fields and, if they do not wish to, they simply run off. Young children are kept out of the agricultural plots because "they step on things" and because "it is too hot for them to work out in the sun."

Along with the learning of practical skills, goes instruction in

tribal lore. The grandfather acts as chief instructor, sitting by the fire each night and lecturing to the children as they lie in bed. He also tells them stories, many of which are didactic in pointing out correct behavior. Children also absorb a great deal of traditional lore informally by listening to the conversations of adults. From infancy on, they are taken to all ceremonials by their parents and they "sit around and watch, or just play around and stay awake as long as they can." Young boys and girls are occasionally invited to join in the dances. Children also attend all funerals and soon become acquainted with the phenomenon of death and the observances connected with it.

There are some items of knowledge which, it is believed, cannot be learned. Myths and song cycles, curing and bewitching techniques, and other abilities and information can only be obtained through dreaming.¹⁷ Consequently no effort is made to educate youngsters in these matters. Actually, many of these items are gradually absorbed from the cultural environment although they may later be described as supernatural gifts obtained in a *sumach ahot* or power-bestowing dream.

Parents are much concerned over the conduct of their children and are ashamed if their behavior falls below the expected standard. Exhortations on correct deportment are given by parents, or, more often, by the grandfather. Boys and girls are told to "live good" and "to try and get along with other children and people throughout life." They are advised "not to be mean" and "not to say mean things" and to "always be honest." Generosity is stressed as a desirable characteristic. Some families stress correct behavior much more than others.

Children are constantly cautioned against dangers, both real and supernatural. Youngsters "are told to be careful of fire or they might burn things up" and to look out for rattlesnakes which are particularly fearsome to the Mohave. Both boys and girls are warned "never to go far away" and "always to say where they are going." A girl is advised to avoid "strange boys."

¹⁷ See Kroeber, 1925, pp. 754-780, and Wallace, 1947, for a discussion of Mohave dream life.

Sexual knowledge is acquired early and easily. Adults are free in their sexual relations and most children observe their parents or other adults engaging in intercourse. Older people also converse freely about sexual matters and frequently use obscene expressions and gestures. This does not necessarily imply promiscuity or great sexual looseness, but it does indicate a frankness in sexual matters foreign to many other tribes. Sexual play among children is mildly discouraged. Masturbation and other manipulation of the genitals is frowned upon. "If a boy begins to play with his private parts, it looks like he is going after a girl and an older man has to have a talk with him." Boys and girls are not supposed to fraternize after early childhood because "people think bad of them if they do."¹⁸ If a number of boys and girls are seen together, the girls receive most of the public disapproval because "they should stay at home and behave." A girl who prefers the company of boys is called a "kumalo" ("bad girl").

Disciplinary methods are mild. Parents usually do not spank a misbehaving child, but instead "they talk to the child when he does wrong and tell him not to do it again." If the misdeed is repeated, "they tell him the same thing." Parents are indulgent and much given to fondling and joking with younger children. Parental affection and a protective attitude toward children are demonstrated in a number of ways. Despite this benevolent attitude, parents expect and usually receive respect and obedience. Children are, on the whole, docile and well-behaved. If an older boy "gets to be real bad and mean," his mother or father "tells the other boys to beat him up." All the boys then get together and give him a sound thrashing. A child sometimes runs off and hides in order to escape a scolding or punishment, and returns only when he thinks that his misdeed has been forgotten. If a youngster has a temper tantrum, his mother "talks to him and tries to make him stop," but if the fit of ill temper continues, it is

¹⁸ Devereux's statements about the extreme sexual looseness among children (Devereux, 1935, 1939) were not corroborated by the informants interviewed.

ignored. Continued outbursts of temper and misbehavior are diagnosed as indicative of future shamanistic tendencies.

A bugaboo, in the form of a ghost (*nijevithi*), is often employed to intimidate an unruly youngster. ("If you do not behave, a *nijevithi* will come and take you away.") Sometimes a child is told "to go away and never come back," and it usually goes off for an hour or two and then returns "and no one says anything." Rewards for good behavior or accomplishment, beyond an occasional word of praise, are few. Rarely, a child is taken visiting "if he does something nice."

CONCLUSION

Infancy is an agreeable period of life. A baby receives care and affection from its parents and other adults. It is fed when hungry and permitted to sleep at will. Confinement in the cradle inhibits its actions and amusements are few, but a parent or other adult is always close by so that it never feels lonely. Little emphasis is placed upon the development of basic habits, and there is no attempt to force training upon a young child. Mohave infancy is characterized by great indulgence—indulgence of a kind that seemingly encourages a secure, unconfused personality in the infant.

Childhood, like infancy, is pleasant for Mohave boys and girls. They lead a free and easy life with few restrictions upon their behavior. It is, however, the time when the meanings of Mohave culture are acquired. Part of this is brought about by stimulated learning or conscious instruction by adults, but a great deal is simply absorbed through exposure to the domestic and community environment. Children perceive what goes on around them, and in their conversation, actions, and play, imitate what they see and hear. Much of a child's education comes from members of his own age-group who share their knowledge with him. Children are given good, if somewhat casual, care and are allowed ample freedom with time for play and opportunity for self-expression. From an early age, parents and other adults regard them benevolently as rational beings important in perpetuating tribal and

cultural continuity. Indulgence continues to mark the parent-child relationship and disciplines are weak. Again, a sound, balanced personality is fostered by the methods of child care.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Curtis, E. S.

- 1908 *The North American Indian* (Cambridge, The University Press), V. 2.

Devereux, George

- 1935 *Sexual Life of the Mohave Indians* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley).
1937 "Der Begriff der Vaterschaft bei den Mohave-Indianern," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 13:72-78.
1939 "Mohave Culture and Personality," *Character and Personality*, 5:91-109.
1941 "Mohave Beliefs Concerning Twins," *AA*, 43:573-92.

Drucker, Philip

- 1941 *Culture Element Distributions: XVII Yuman-Punan* (University of California Anthropological Records), V. 6, No. 3.

Forde, C. Darryl

- 1931 *Ethnography of the Yuma Indians*, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, V. 28, No. 4.

Gifford, E. W.

- 1933 *The Cocopa*, *ibid.*, V. 31, No. 5.

Kroeber, A. L.

- 1902 "Preliminary Sketch of the Mohave Indians," *AA*, 4: 276-85.
1925a *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 78 (Washington, D. C.).

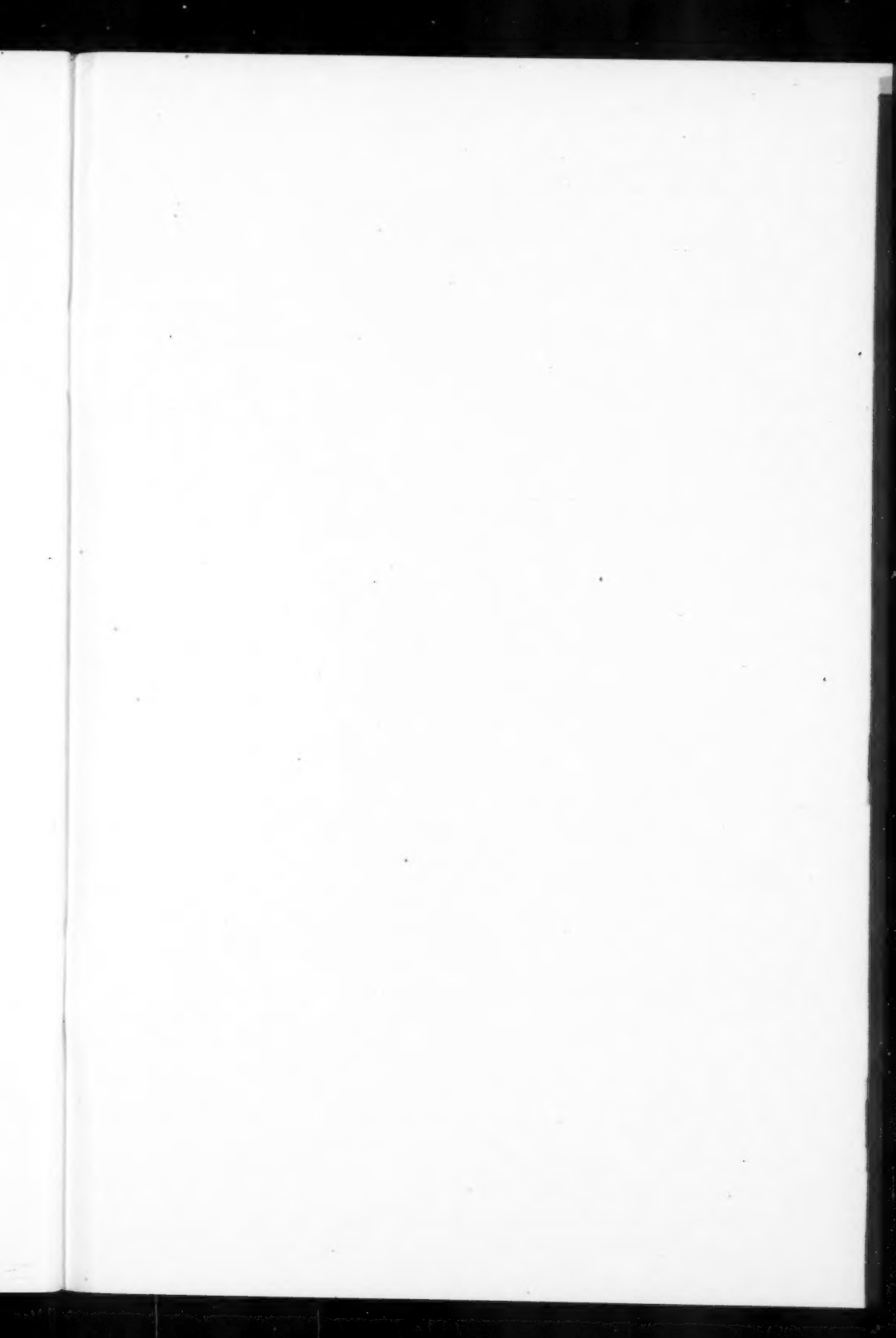
- 1925b "Earth-Tongue, a Mohave," in E. C. Parsons (ed.),
American Indian Life (New York).

Spier, Leslie

- 1933 Yuman Tribes of the Gila River, University of Chicago
Publications in Anthropology, Ethnological Series.

Wallace, W. J.

- 1947 "The Dream in Mohave Life," Journal of American
Folklore, 60:252-58.



CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

AIMS:

The advancement of anthropological and missionary science through promotion of:

- a. Anthropological research and publication by Catholic missionaries and other specialists, and of
- b. Ethnological training among candidates for mission work.

MEMBERSHIP:

Open to all, clergy and laity, Catholic and non-Catholic, interested in the aims of the Conference.

Dues: Active members	\$ 5.00 a year
Contributing members	10.00 a year
Sustaining members	25.00 a year
Life members	100.00

Subscription to *PRIMITIVE MAN*: Yearly (2 double or 4 single numbers), \$1.00; double numbers, 50 cents each; single numbers, 25 cents each.

PUBLICATIONS:

All classes of members receive:

1. PUBLICATIONS OF THE CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE—the annual series of brochures and monographs;
2. *PRIMITIVE MAN*—published quarterly.

Please address all applications for membership and other communications to the Secretary-Treasurer,

Rev. John M. Cooper

Catholic University of America, Washington, 17, D. C., U. S. A.

